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ABSTRACT

Of the nearly 14,500 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) now registered with Egypt's Ministry of Social Affairs, 25% are inactive, 3% are less than 3 years old, and 7% are private member associations. The Egyptian government's promotion of specific social programs and service models in the NGO sector began after the October War of 1973. Egyptian NGOs, which are primarily politically neutral, fall into five categories: community development associations; religious (Muslim and Christian) welfare associations; private member associations; nonreligious social welfare associations; and scientific and public cultural organizations. In 1992, Egypt's NGO sector had an estimated total annual revenue of \$85-110 million (U.S.), with private donations and activity (user) fees accounting for two-thirds of those revenues. Key NGO services and activities include the following: day care programs, sewing classes, health services, aid to widow-headed households, skills training and productive activities, general education, and religious instruction. Most Egyptian NGO services aim to serve the middle and lower-middle classes rather than the poor. The leaders and members of Egyptian NGOs are overwhelmingly male. NGO services are concentrated in urban areas. The sector is characterized by rivalries between associations at both the community and national levels. (The document contains 26 references and 10 tables and figures.) (MN)

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EGYPT'S NGO SECTOR A BRIEFING PAPER

Robert J. LaTowsky, Ph.D.

January 1997

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDA Community Development Association
CDS Community Development Services
CERCISE Continue Francisco Organization of Soci

CEOSS Coptic Evangelical Organization of Social Service

est established

MoSA Ministry of Social Affairs

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
PVO Private Voluntary Organisation

NOTE:

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EGYPT'S NGO SECTOR

A Definition

In its broadest definition, Egypt's NGO sector comprises 14,000-15,000 private non-profit organizations registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs, some 20-30 professional syndicates and trade unions, a comparable number of international NGOs registered with one of several government entities, more than 1,000 youth clubs supervised by the Supreme Council for Youth and Sport, some 5,000 Islamic zakat committees (mosque-based) that collect and distribute charity to the needy, and several thousand other informal mosque and church congregational groups.

In practice, however, studies of Egypt's NGO sector - and donor support - have targeted the first group of private non-profit organizations: the 14,000-15,000 Muslim, Christian and secular social welfare agencies, community development associations, businessmen's organizations, closed private-member associations, and a wide variety of cultural, scientific, social and sports societies, all registered under Law 32 with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Public discussion of Egyptian NGOs also typically refers to this single, diverse group of private associations alone, often referred to as "private voluntary organizations" (PVOs). This paper follows the popular convention and available information. But even by this narrow definition, Egypt's NGO sector is by far the largest in the Arab world and among the oldest and largest of Southern NGO sectors.

Historical Development

Organized efforts by private citizens in social welfare and community service have a long and distinguished history in Egypt. In accordance with Islamic principles and Egyptian cultural traditions, private philanthropy by rulers and elites had periodically endowed the largest cities with public baths and drinking water, schools, libraries and other public facilities over many centuries. By the mid-19th century, shortly after the founding of the modern Egyptian state, organized benevolent associations and mutual aid societies began to appear. These first private organizations chiefly served foreign nationals and Christian populations in Cairo and Alexandria. But with the emergence of an indigenous propertied elite in the late 1800s, modern associational life and a philosophy of social welfare took root within educated urban society. The founders of these early secular, Islamic and indigenous Christian welfare

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This author does, however, include within Egypt's NGO sector the limited number (12-15) of international NGOs (e.g. CARE, Save the Children, Near East Foundation, Project Hope) in Egypt whose programmes have increasingly targeted local Egyptian NGOs for technical assistance, training and programme funding support. Unlike the associations registered under Law 32, very little statistical or case study data is available on the other groups included in this broadest definition of Egypt's NGO sector.

In Cairo these included the French Benevolent Association (est. 1865), St. Vincent de Paul Society (1853), the Mutual Aid Association for Italian Workers (1863), Greek Catholic Benevolent Association (1880), the Maronite Benevolent Association for Men (1880), and al-Youssefiya Club (1878). The first Egyptian nonprofit organization was established in Alexandria by immigrant Greeks in 1821 (Kandil 1993: 3).

societies³ saw that traditional providers of public social assistance - the family, the wealthy, and the occasional charity provided by mosques and churches - were inadequate to meet the needs of Egypt's growing and more visible population of needy in the major cities. In the following decades (1920s-1950s), marked by the inauguration of Egypt's first constitution and partial emancipation from British rule, their example was increasingly emulated by two other social groups: the first, a small but expanding middle class of urban professionals and civil servants pursuing political objectives and class self-interests;⁴ the second, mutual aid societies established by migrants from the same village or region.⁵ Altogether, their efforts established a sizable community of private associations in Egypt's major cities by the mid-1950s, including some 650 benevolent, religious welfare, cultural and mutual aid societies in Cairo alone.

Government relief and social assistance efforts began in 1936 with the creation of the Higher Board for Social Reform and, soon after (1939), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). But unlike the private welfare societies that chiefly assisted Egypt's urban poor, the government's primary concern was to relieve the serious and deteriorating conditions of the rural peasantry (fellahin), then the great majority of Egypt's population, in the wake of the 1930s Depression. The Ministry of Social Affairs soon opened a number of rural welfare centres in the provinces that offered limited health services and literacy education and promoted local handicraft production through skills training in artisanal industries to supplement the low agricultural wages of the landless rural poor. By 1950, more than 125 Rural Social Centres were serving one and one-half million fellahin, and the Ministry planned to establish 30-40 new centres annually. In the following decades, these Rural Social Centres and their successors, the "Community Development Associations" (CDAs), would be added to the government registry of Egyptian private voluntary associations.

Accelerating out-migration from villages in the mid-1940s and rapid population growth in the major cities soon, however, brought the Ministry and private welfare societies together in common concern for urban living conditions and the welfare of the poor underclass. The need to co-ordinate public and private services produced the first law establishing government regulation of the private welfare societies: Law 49 of 1945. This law and its successor, Law

⁷ Mattison 1951: 464-5.



³ Among them Mo'assa Islamic Association (est. 1908), the Egyptian Red Crescent Society (1912), al-Mahaba Coptic Orthodox Benevolent Association (1902), the Coptic Catholic Benevolent Society (1886), and Islamic Benevolent Association (1892), all founded in Cairo.

⁴ Influential societies characteristic of this new social class included the Young Men's Muslim Association and the Muslim Brotherhood, both established in the 1920s. "Both were highly popular, well organized and had branches in various Arab countries.... They had a profound effect on Arab politics both inside and outside Egypt" (Kandil 1993: 4).

Migrant associations were very small but numerous in Cairo by the 1940s and 1950s. Of the social agencies registered in Cairo in 1956 (Istiphan 1956), nearly one in five was a mutual aid society of migrants (rabita). Among them were associations of Nubians, Sudanese and migrant villagers from labour-exporting communities in Upper Egypt (chiefly) and the Delta.

⁶ Private citizens and organizations did establish a number of Rural Reform Associations in selected villages, but they were very few compared with the many private social agencies in urban areas (Iwan, 1968).

356 of 1952, aimed "to promote better practices rather than to establish controls over agency activity". For these government and private efforts, Egypt received considerable international recognition as a pioneer in community development in the developing world after the Second World War. The 1952 Revolution launched a new era in Egyptian social reform and protection. Declaring that the old ruling class was insensitive to the conditions of the masses, the revolutionary government set social welfare and the "establishment of social justice" as major goals of their programme. Agrarian reforms, including land redistribution, began immediately. The new government continued to build rural welfare centres as well as new "combined service units" with health, social, education, agricultural and handicraft industry facilities, and to assign government employees as staff. But far fewer centres were built by 1960 than originally planned, owing to budget constraints. And although "self-help" was a stated principle of the government's approach to social welfare, local participation was not greatly encouraged. Many of the rural centres and combined units suffered from insufficient resources for regular operations, poor administration and declining staff motivation.

The revolutionary government then strongly took the lead in social protection and welfare activities. Private associations were never prohibited, but the official policy was that government would meet the problems and social needs of Egypt's poor. In the socialist era of the 1960s, Egyptians were repeatedly told that the government would solve all social problems. Across the country, the Ministry of Social Affairs established local "social units" of Ministry employees to administer state social programmes and increasingly directed and regulated (e.g. Law 32 of 1965) the activities and affairs of some four thousand private voluntary organizations. State supervision of private agencies intensified as the revolutionary government grew increasingly suspicious of political opposition and confronted the urgent need to assist hundreds of thousands of Egyptian refugees forced from the eastern Delta and Suez Canal Zone by the June 1967 War and the War of Attrition that continued with Israel. In this politically authoritarian and war context, government authorities tightened controls on private associations and encouraged their dependence on Ministry grants, personnel and direction. Several private societies and institutions were directly taken over by government. Until the early 1970s, MoSA continued to establish new Community Development Associations (CDAs) in both rural and urban communities with volunteer boards and Ministry staff, but faced increasing difficulty in mobilizing popular support and financial contributions for these organizations. 10 Political authoritarianism, intensive security concerns, a burdensome bureaucracy, and the government's insistent responsibility to provide for all of Egypt's needs effectively dampened community enthusiasm for these dependent, secular associations.



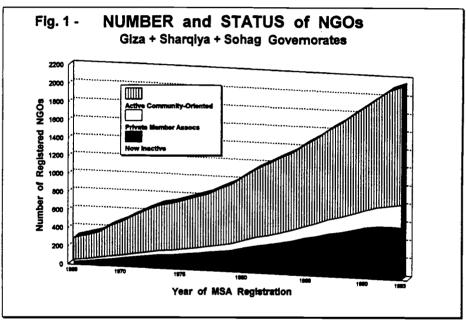
⁸ Istiphan (1956: iv). This legislation first established Ministry of Social Affairs' registration and oversight of Egyptian NGOs. Ministry regulation and supervision of the NGO sector would be considerably strengthened by Law 32 of 1965.

⁹ Iwan (1968: 267-8).

¹⁰ CDAs - Community Development Associations - are one of several (now 17) categories for NGO registration with the Ministry of Social Affairs. See *A Sector Typology* below. Today some 3,100 CDAs comprise the largest category of Egyptian NGOs (n=14,500) registered with the Ministry, of which 80-85% are active. These include CDAs created by the Ministry in the 1960s and early 1970s and still active, as well as many CDAs founded and operated independently through private citizen initiative.

Following the October War of 1973, the Egyptian government ended its practice of founding new CDAs and began promoting specific social programmes and service models to the NGO sector. Construction grants, annual programme subsidies and seconded staff from the Ministry of Social Affairs prompted many NGOs - especially the Ministry-created CDAs - to establish day-care (nursery) centres, sewing classes for women and girls (mashghal), women's clubs (nadi nisaa'i), and artisanal skills training (carpentry and weaving) for youth. Government subsidies to sustain these earlier NGO programmes and services continue. The real value of this aid has, however, been greatly eroded by persistent high inflation since the early 1980s.

But throughout this period and up to the present, private citizens have continued to form many new associations (Figure 1). Today, nearly 15,000 NGOs are registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Of this total, one-quarter are inactive and another seven (7%) percent are private member associations (e.g. mutual aid societies) that serve only their own members. The remaining two-thirds of Egypt's NGO sector - almost 10,000 associations - are active, community-oriented organisations (Figure 2) in a total population of 60 million citizens.



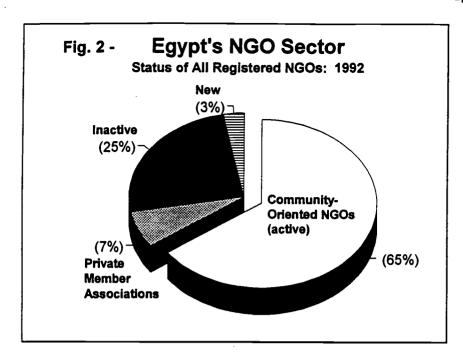
Egypt PVO Sector Study, 1986

The overwhelming majority of Egyptian NGOs are politically neutral, unlike the NGO sectors of many Latin American countries that have traditionally offered refuge and an organizational base for political opposition. Unregistered groupings and informal networks of political opposition - including Islamicist militants - do exist in Egypt, but their numbers and popular support are very limited. Popular movements are rare and small, even among women. In marked contrast to the liberalization of Egypt's for-profit business sector in recent years, there has been no significant easing of the political, bureaucratic or security oversight of Egypt's non-profit sector. Law 32 of 1965, enacted by an authoritarian regime, continues to regulate NGO affairs without significant amendment. The law is certainly not, as senior government

Figure 1 shows the historic, cumulative growth and current status of NGO registrations for a national representative sample of 3 governorates: Giza, Sohag and Sharqiya. The data for this and all other graphs included in this paper were compiled by the author as project director of the Egypt PVO Sector Study (1992-present) commissioned by the World Bank. In Figure 1, NGOs are shown by the year of registration with the Ministry of Social Affairs.



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Egypt PVO Sector Study, 1995

officials fully admit, an enabling environment or empowering context for NGO initiative. But the overall financial performance of the NGO sector and the considerable achievements of many individual associations contradict popular assumptions (and the commentaries of political opponents) that Egypt's regulatory context is a major impediment to NGO fund-raising and organizational development. The NGO sector is valued and supported by the great majority of Ministry of Social Affairs employees responsible for their oversight, many of whom are themselves active NGO members. Law 32 sanctions firm government control of NGO affairs, but in practice active intrusion is exceptional and generally limited to the investigation of financial improprieties.

A Sector Typology

Egypt's NGO sector comprises a large and diverse array of associations that might be catalogued in various ways. The typology applied in this paper is particularly meaningful to donor agencies and development practitioners. It distinguishes five major categories of Egyptian NGOs identified by religious affiliation and general purpose (e.g. community development, religious and social welfare, private member aid, etc). The number and current status of NGOs within each category is shown graphically in *Figure 3*. 12

The five categories are as follows:

1. Community Development Associations: In this typology, CDAs form the second largest group of Egyptian NGOs. The "Community Development Association" is a specific category



¹² See Note 11. Figure 3 is a comprehensive classification of all NGOs (2,200) registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs in three representative governorates in 1993. "New" NGOs refer to associations registered between 1991 and 1993 for which financial accounts were unavailable and activities or services were only just starting. As is the case for most typologies, a small number of exceptional NGOs could be included in more than one category. But the nature and purpose of the great majority of associations are clear and unequivocal.

for NGO registration in the Ministry of Social Affairs. 13 CDAs characteristically seek to provide a variety of services and resources to the local community, including day-care programmes, sewing classes for girls and women, health clinics, skills training centres for vouth and productive activities. Some CDAs also provide credit for small enterprise and manage public services (e.g. garbage collection, community clean-up). "CDA" is a popular category for NGO registrations, owing to the wide range of permissible services and activities that this registration allows. It is not these services, however, that distinguish CDAs from the many religious (Muslim and Christian) welfare associations. Nor is it their membership: the religious affiliation of CDA members reflects that of Egypt as a whole (93-94% Muslim), and the large majority of CDAs offer Quranic instruction. Rather, it is their mandate to serve the community as a whole with an array of services and their authority to engage in production activities that identifies CDAs as local "development" organizations. Included in this category are both government- and citizen-initiated CDAs (see Historical Development above). Some 3,100 CDAs are registered in Egypt, predominately in rural villages and towns but also in some low-income urban neighbourhoods.

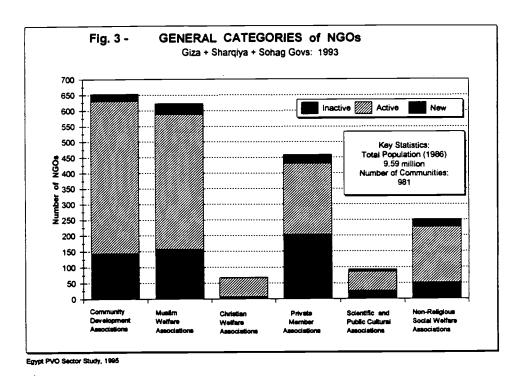
- 2. Religious (Muslim and Christian) Welfare Associations: Religious welfare or benevolent associations are distinguished by their religious identity and purpose. Social and educational programmes, day-care services, cultural activities and charitable aid (social assistance) for the poor are the characteristic services of these NGOs. Unlike CDAs, few religious welfare associations include economic or productive activities. In the past decade, many Muslim associations have added medical services. The target group, focus and chief beneficiaries of religious welfare associations are the faithful, although some services (especially day-care and medical services) are used by others. Together, Muslim and Christian benevolent associations comprise the largest group of Egyptian NGOs. Figure 3, however, divides this category into two sub-groups (Muslim and Christian) to show their relative number. This category of NGOs predominates in metropolitan and urban areas. Included in this group is a small number of prominent, national Muslim NGOs that have affiliate associations throughout Egypt.
- 3. Private Member Associations. Private member associations typically comprise employees (government, university and large public-sector industries) who have formed mutual aid societies. Annual dues are used to defray the costs of weddings, births, illness, burial and/or religious pilgrimages by members and their families. Few private member associations provide services openly to the community. These NGOs are overwhelmingly located in metropolitan Egypt: Greater Cairo (including metropolitan districts of Giza) and Alexandria. ¹⁴ Private member associations are readily identifiable by name and include, besides employee groups, mutual aid associations of migrants from specific villages or rural areas of Egypt.

¹⁴ The relative size of this category of NGOs as shown in *Figure 3 is* not representative of Egypt as a whole. Only 7% of Egyptian NGOs are private member associations. Its larger share in *Figure 3* reflects the inclusion of metropolitan Giza in the study sample.



¹³ CDA is one of 17 categories for NGO registration in the Ministry of Social Affairs. In practice, most NGOs - except CDAs - register in more than one category (e.g. educational/cultural activities plus social assistance). Some NGOs register in four or more categories to accommodate the full range of services and activities that they offer. For this reason, an NGO typology based on MoSA registration categories would be misleading.

- 4. Non-Religious Social Welfare Associations. Included in this category are secular (no religious affiliation) NGOs that provide social welfare services to the community as a whole or specific beneficiary groups (e.g. the elderly, handicapped, juvenile delinquents, prisoners' families, etc.) as well as a number of large national NGOs with historically close ties to government (e.g. the Red Crescent Society, Productive Families Association, Winter Aid). Also included here are the national federations of NGOs and, more recently, a small number of prominent businessmen's associations promoting economic and business interests.
- 5. Scientific and Public Cultural Associations. This final and smallest -- category of Egyptian NGOs chiefly includes scientific and non-religious cultural associations (e.g. associations of artists and writers, university graduates) that conduct lectures and cultural activities openly for the public. Also included here are a small but growing number of environmental NGOs that implement projects and advocate on behalf of environmental issues, as well as Egypt's Human Rights Organization.



Financial Profile of the Sector

NGO financial statements provide both invaluable insights on the types of services, level of activity, level of public support, and the organizational viability of individual associations, and an empirical basis for determining sector resources and financial independence. All NGOs registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs are required to submit their annual financial accounts to the Ministry. For the great majority of NGOs, these accounts are the only available written record of association activities. ¹⁵



¹⁵ Only the largest NGOs - perhaps 5% of all associations -- produce annual *narrative* reports of their activities.

Egypt's NGO sector demonstrates significant capacity to mobilize local resources and annual revenues to support local development initiatives and valued services to community members. Indeed, this is perhaps its most significant contribution to national development today. Common perceptions far underestimate the sector's financial resources. Estimated total annual revenues of all community-oriented NGOs in 1992 (excluding private member associations) were US\$ 85-110 million (LE 275-350 million) with additional financial reserves of US\$ 22-30 million (LE 70-95 million). Contrary to popular assertions, "lack of financial resources" is not a chief deficiency of the NGO sector (see *Figure 4*).

Figure 4
Egypt's NGO Sector:
Annual Resources

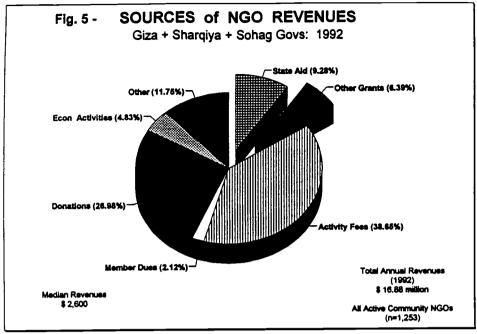
Total NGO Sector Revenues 1992 (includes private member associations)	£E 475-575 million
Total NGO Sector Revenues 1992 (community-oriented NGOs only - excludes private members associations)	£E 275-350 million

Source: Egypt PVO Sector Study. The World Bank (1995)

Figure 5 identifies the different sources of annual revenue for a large representative sample of Egyptian NGOs. Private donations and activity (user) fees alone provided two-thirds of all NGO revenues in 1992. In contrast, state aid, including grants from all government sources, and other grants (chiefly foreign aid) were minor funding contributions that provided less than 15% of sector revenues. These findings clearly refute assertions about the NGO sector's presumed dependency on state or foreign aid. Estimated sector revenues in 1992 were more than 18 times greater than the total value of Ministry of Social Affairs' grants to NGOs. And the majority of NGOs receive no government aid at all. CDAs, especially those founded by Ministry initiative in the 1960s, are more likely to receive small state grants than other categories of NGOs (see Figure 6). But these state grants largely support specific CDA services that were historically promoted by the Ministry of Social Affairs, especially day-care services and skills training and production centres (carpentry, sewing, weaving) for youth. A limited number of Muslim welfare societies also receive small grants from the Ministry of Awqafs (Religious Endowments) and al-Azhar for religious education institutes and mosques. But overall, state aid is a minor share of total NGO sector revenues, and only a very small minority of NGOs are financially dependent on such grants.

¹⁶ LaTowsky 1994 (Report 1: Financial Profile of Egypt's PVO Sector, Egypt PVO Sector Study report prepared for the World Bank, Washington, DC). This estimate is extrapolated from analysis of the annual (1992) financial accounts of a large representative sample of 2,200 NGOs. These annual financial accounts clearly identify the different sources, and often the use, of NGO revenues.





Egypt PVO Sector Study, 1995

Activity (user) fees were the single largest source of PVO revenues, providing nearly forty percent of NGO income. Medical services, day-care, religious pilgrimage fees and educational programmes, in that order, collected most of these fees. User fees do not cover the costs of all NGO services. But activity fees do provide nearly all of the daily operating costs of health services - a major NGO activity in urban centres - even at low client fees. The high volume of patients sustains these medical services at low fees (average US\$1.00 per office visit). The share of activity fees to total revenues is not, however, a good measure of NGO viability. A large number of weak NGOs are sustained only by the fees they receive from limited numbers of clients in one or two services. But activity fees for services do provide a continued flow of revenues and are important to NGO visibility. The absolute value of activity fees is a better index of popular support for and participation in specific NGOs. 17

Private donations are the second largest source of NGO revenues, contributing over one-quarter (27%) of total sector income. ¹⁸ The great majority of these donations are cash, although some NGOs separately report in-kind contributions as well. Included with donations are earnings from government-authorized sales of donation "coupons". These sales provide significant revenue for the few NGOs - chiefly the non-religious social welfare associations with historically close ties to government - authorized to solicit donations in this manner. One major source and purpose of private donations are the monthly fees paid by sponsors of children in the *Kafaalet al-Yateem* (Orphan Sponsorship) Programme implemented by a large network of Muslim social welfare NGOs. This programme receives and distributes nearly LE2 million (US\$ 600,000) each month to women-headed households with young children (see *Key NGO Services* below). NGOs also receive significant donation support for other charitable aid (including financial assistance to students), disaster relief, mosque and religious institute



Total user fees of more than US\$2,500 annually (excluding one-time pilgrimage fees) suggest a significant level of regular participation in NGO activities.

¹⁸ Egypt PVO Sector Study: 1992 data for a large representative sample of Egyptian NGOs.

construction, and community infrastructure projects (health units, village wastewater systems, telephone exchanges). The NGO sector's overall capacity to mobilize private donations is not, of course, shared by every association. *Table 1* shows the distribution of all NGOs in three governorates by the total value of donations received. As expected, the distribution is skewed: a small number of metropolitan and urban associations collected major sums, while a large percentage received no donations at all. But significant community support and financial participation in NGO initiatives is also broadly evident: 1 in every 5 active NGOs - 20% of all active associations - received US\$ 1,001 - 10,000 in private donations in a single year. These are considerable sums for Egypt, given a per capita GNP of US\$ 700.

Table 1: Distribution of NGOs by the Total Value of Donations Received, 1992

Total Donations	Gi	za	Shai	rqiya	Sof	nag	TO	ΓAL
US\$ equivalent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
744						44.6		
\$1 - 1,000	181	37 %	189	39 %	143	30 %	513	41 %
\$ 5,001 - 10,000	35	7 %	19	4 %	7	1 %	61	5 %
9 (F. 01) (F. 01)								
\$ 25,001 - 50,000	13	3 %	4	1 %	0	0 %	17	19
1 2 01								
TOTALS	484	100 %	477	100%	310	100 %	1271	100 1

NOTE: Figures include total cash (chiefly) and in-kind donations to all active NGOs, except private member associations. Equivalent rates: LE 3.20 = US\$ 1.00 (1992).

Economic activities have long been promoted to NGOs as a potential source of profit to support services and enhance financial self-reliance. Since the 1960s, the Ministry of Social Affairs has encouraged NGOs to establish productive projects, especially in rural communities. The most common types of NGO owned-and-operated productive activities are traditional sewing and knitting projects, carpentry and furniture workshops, rug weaving, and bee-keeping for honey production. Field visits and NGO case studies in recent years have reported that many such economic activities have ceased or are very weak. Gross revenues from economic activities - before expenses - provided less than five (5%) percent of total sector revenues (Figure 5). And more than three-quarters of NGOs (including nearly all religious social welfare associations) reported no economic activities at all. But profits from NGO economic activities hardly exist. Net income only rarely exceeds US\$ 350 per year. Many more associations report net operating losses from their production activities. Others have been closed. Very few

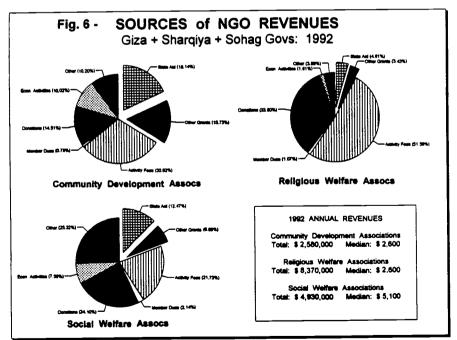


¹⁹ Only 1% of active NGOs in a large sample earned more than US\$ 2,500 in gross revenues from economic activities in 1992. Contrary to popular conception, only a very small number of NGOs can "...finance themselves by selling goods produced in their own projects".

of these NGO owned-and-managed economic activities can be counted a success. Yet, many new associations - especially CDAs - and their inexperienced leaders still often propose these same failed models of traditional NGO activities to donors for funding support. The majority of NGO leaders and community members have not yet learned that productive projects are far more often a liability than an asset for local NGOs.

Other sources of NGO revenue together contributed about 12% of total sector income in a large sample (Figure 5). This residual category includes income derived from rent, interest or profits on bank deposits and investment accounts, loans from NGO directors and members, sale of association assets (furnishings and equipment) and loan instalments returned to NGO credit programmes.

Overall, the NGO sector clearly demonstrates significant capacity to mobilize local financial resources. This capacity is not of course shared by all NGOs, and the relative significance of different revenue sources varies considerably among the different types of NGOs (Figure 6). But the large majority of NGOs are financially weak. Nearly 60% of active, community-oriented NGOs in a large sample had less than US\$ 5,000 in total revenues in 1992. And half of this majority (28%) earned under US\$ 1,000 (Figure 7). Yet the sector also includes a number of larger, more financially secure associations - mostly urban - that are prominent institutions and major providers of low-cost medical and social services to grateful clients and surrounding communities. Most of these associations - perhaps two-thirds of the 175 NGOs in this same sample whose total annual (1992) revenues exceeded US\$ 25,000 - are truly private and independent, community-based organizations. The remainder are mainly social welfare associations with historically close ties to government.

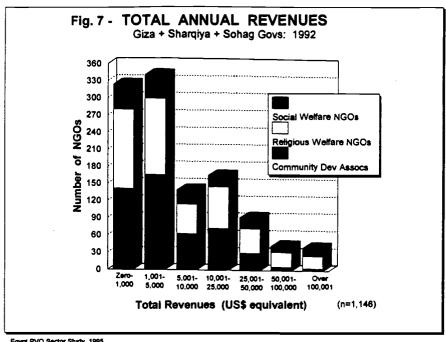


Egypt PVO Sector Study, 1995



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²⁰ Figure 7 includes all active, community-oriented NGOs (i.e. excludes private member associations) in Giza, Sharqiya and Sohag governorates (1992).



Egypt PVO Sector Study, 1995

Voluntary support is limited on the whole to core Board members, but some NGOs appear to be able to raise considerable assistance from this source. The question of volunteerism among Egyptian NGOs needs further field study.

Key NGO Services and Activities

The major programme activities and services of Egypt's NGO sector are day-care programmes, health services, aid to widow-headed households with children (Kafaalet al-Yateem Programme), traditional skills training and productive activities for women and youth, supplementary educational classes (group tutoring) and religious instruction, facilities for social activities and celebrations, community social and cultural activities, and select services to specific beneficiary groups (e.g. the handicapped, orphans, drug addicts and juvenile delinquents, foster families, the sick and infirmed, and the burial of deceased poor). More recently, a growing number of NGOs have established small credit funds with donor support to promote employment generation, small enterprise and income-generating projects in their communities.

Day-care programmes for pre-school children and sewing classes for women and girls are by far the most frequent services provided by Egyptian NGOs. Over the past decade, the sewing classes have, for several reasons including diminished need and relevance, steadily withered. Day-care services, however, continue to expand with the encouragement and support of the Ministry of Social Affairs. MoSA aid to day-care includes grants for construction and furnishing, annual programme subsidies that typically provide 40-70% of operating costs, and the base salaries of seconded staff. The largest share of the Ministry's annual budget for NGO programme support goes to day-care. And these services are common in both urban and rural NGOs as an aid to government employees. NGO day-care centres typically receive 80-200 children daily; some 2-3 times this number.



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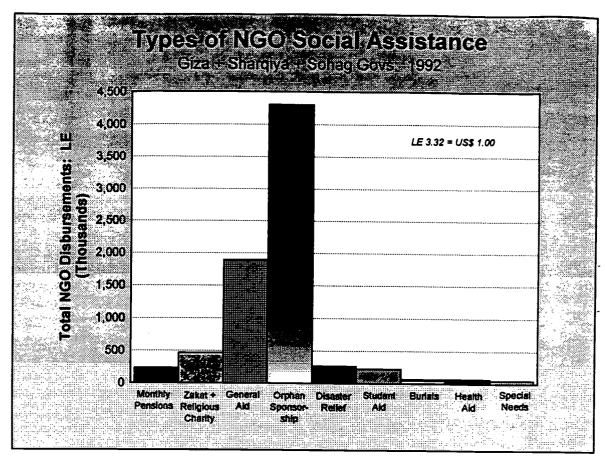
Over the past fifteen years, NGO health services have grown rapidly in number and size. chiefly due to the decline of government medical services and the falling real incomes of middle and lower-middle class citizens that have made private health care unaffordable. Legions of unemployed medical graduates without the capital or clientele to open their own clinics offer a steady supply of low-cost labour. What once were single-room clinics have become polyclinics medical laboratories. dental and x-rav units. pharmacies. with surgeries. gynaecology-obstetrics and in-patient care. And polyclinics have grown to full-sized hospitals. The great majority of these medical services are administered by Muslim welfare societies. Consequently, these services are predominately urban. One-quarter of all non-private member NGOs in Giza governorate - 1 in every 2 in metropolitan Giza - now offers medical care. Few rural NGOs, however, have successfully replicated this model, although the spread of rural pharmacies in recent years is a promising development worthy of increased support. Physicians are likely to leave village clinics once they have gathered a clientele, and replacements are not easily found. Patient fees at NGO health services are low: typically US\$ 1.00 for an office visit and examination, split evenly between the attending physician and NGO. Follow-up care and specialized treatments are also provided at sharply reduced prices, consistent with the NGO objective to offer the same quality medical care provided by private physicians and hospitals at a price affordable to nearly everyone. And primary health care is free to the poorest. Yet NGO health services - unlike most other NGO services - typically cover all of their operating costs (and often realize a healthy profit) from these fees alone. High patient volume (including Christians), low-paid physicians, exemption from taxes, and reliance on mosque donations and foreign aid grants for facilities construction and equipment together assure the financial sustainability of NGO health services. The quality of medical care provided by these clinics is, of course, variable. And nearly without exception, NGO health services (like their private-sector counterparts) offer only curative care - not preventive health services - and no health education to patients. But many of the large NGO polyclinics and hospitals now boast a quality of service comparable to all but the most exclusive private facilities. Until recently, however, government oversight of NGO health services has been nonexistent. Despite their prominence and urgent growth, neither the health nor social affairs bureaucracies have monitored these services which receive no government funding.

Since the mid-1980s, aid to widow-headed households with young children has been the fastest growing NGO programme in Egypt, exceeding even the impressive development of NGO health services. While the public has long associated NGOs with "charity" in Egypt, the sector has not, in fact, been a major provider of direct social assistance (cash and in-kind transfers) to the poor and needy. Historically, such aid has been limited and disbursed only periodically, often at the appropriate religious feasts. But a major new aid programme has emerged and spread rapidly among scores of NGOs in the last several years. This initiative, the Kafaalef al-Yateem (Orphan Sponsorship) Programme, provides regular cash and in-kind aid and fee waivers for school and medical care to a priority target group of poor in Egypt, widow-headed households with young children. Led by a prominent national Muslim NGO with affiliate associations across Egypt, this monthly aid programme has quickly become the sector's largest social assistance scheme and dramatically raised total NGO sector spending on charitable assistance. Funded entirely from private donations (child sponsorships), the programme's total income in 1992 was second only to NGO health services in a large representative sample from three governorates (Figure 8). And the programme has stimulated an increase in other NGO social assistance, especially by Muslim welfare associations. As a result, social aid spending is concentrated in metropolitan and urban areas where religious welfare NGOs predominate. Only a small share of NGO social assistance reaches the rural poor. But the rapid growth of NGO participation and total spending in the Kafaalet al-Yateem



LaTowsky

Fig. 8



Egypt PVO Sector Study, 1995

Programme illustrates the impact of leadership by a national association and a new programme model of publicly-valued services for NGO action. The programme's achievement confirms that neither "lack of resources" nor "regulation" is a major constraint to NGO initiative in Egypt.

NGO skills training and productive activities, once a priority of the Ministry of Social Affairs, have declined, stagnated at desultory levels of activity, or closed in most NGOs that began these activities. For skills training, traditional apprenticeships in private sector workshops are often far superior and preferred by trainees and parents. And NGO leaders have lacked the experience, incentives, and business management skills (especially sales and marketing) necessary to succeed in profitable enterprise. Selected NGO training programmes in new skills - including computer skills - have shown greater success in the short term. But the relatively high cost per beneficiary and rapidly changing job prospects for specific skills are a constant threat to the sustainability of institution-based training.

General education and religious instruction for youth receive ever greater support and commitment from the NGO sector - most notably from Muslim welfare associations. While public education in Egypt is free, supplementary tutoring is essential for success in all-important examinations. But the costs of private tutors are a heavy burden on middle and

These traditional training and production centres persist chiefly in the scores of "government-initiated" village CDAs founded in the 1960s. Staffed entirely with Ministry employees, many of these CDAs have, in effect, become production cooperatives. These associations are immediately identifiable by their financial accounts, in which a number of small productive activities (together with their Ministry subsidies) provide nearly all association income and both member dues and donations are non-existent, and by their year of registration.



low-income families. Many CDAs and religious welfare associations now offer tutoring classes (fusual taqwiya) in key subjects at minimal cost to students in addition to traditional instruction in Ouranic recitation. But increasingly, Muslim NGOs and rural CDAs are establishing religious (al-Azhar) institutes with government funding support.22 Many NGO leaders state frankly, however, that their chief purpose in establishing these religious institutes is to respond to a critical shortage of public schools and classrooms. The availability of limited but useful grants was one incentive for building "religious" schools. But more significant, in their view, were the burdensome regulations and engineering requirements prescribed by the Ministry of Education that greatly increased the cost and entanglements of community school projects. "Besides," they often add, "the institutes meet the people's interests in religious education as well." The important point here is that public support for religious projects often reflects more than popular faith and the value of religion. In many cases, 'religious' projects are an effective NGO strategy for circumventing bureaucratic obstacles and garnering private donations for multi-purpose facilities.²³ During the 1960s and 70s, many NGOs had implemented literacy programmes with government aid. But most of these programmes are now dormant, and the currently resurgent campaign of illiteracy eradication in Egypt is largely a government effort.

In response to high unemployment and persistent poverty, a growing number of CDAs - and some religious welfare associations - have begun implementing credit programmes to promote self-employment, income-generation and small enterprise with loan capital and operations funding provided by foreign donor grants. CARE/Egypt has been a prominent leader in this area, assisting over 140 rural CDAs to date to establish and sustain revolving loan programmes. Other donors and the government's Social Fund for Development have recently joined this effort and the promotion of new NGO initiatives in community economic development.

NGO Social Composition, Beneficiaries and Geographic Outreach

Most NGO services (e.g. day-care, health services, sewing classes, social and cultural activities, religious instruction and tutoring, celebration halls, women's and youth clubs) in Egypt aim to serve the middle and lower-middle classes - not the poor. This choice of target group reflects the pervasively middle-class composition of the NGO sector itself. The sector includes no grassroots activist, self-empowered organization of workers or poor (e.g. Grameen Bank, Women's Work Forum) as in South Asia, the Philippines, and some Latin American countries. In Egypt, rather, it is the values and priorities of middle-class government employees and shopkeepers that have historically dominated the sector and established its generally paternalistic approach, its characteristic array of activities, and its charitable orientation of "service to the community." Indeed, when NGO leaders speak of the poor, they generally describe misfortunate families of the middle- and lower-middle classes who have fallen into poverty, not the historic masses of rural and urban poor. Not until the Kafaalet al-Yateem Programme began in the mid-1980s did the NGO sector provide effective, meaningful



²² From al-Azhar and the Ministry of Awqafs (Religious Endowments).

²³ Similarly, a number of NGO leaders have also volunteered that in filing the necessary permits to solicit donations, they write "mosque construction" to facilitate approval. But their purpose and the destination for these funds were other NGO services.

²⁴ As, for example, those widow-headed households with young children assisted by the hugely successful *Kafaalet al-Yateem* (Orphan Sponsorship) Programme.

assistance to significant numbers of (chiefly urban) poor. And while some poor have benefited from free NGO health services, they are not the priority target group. There are, of course, exceptions including the few NGOs led by upper-middle class professionals in metropolitan Egypt, the small community of international NGOs that promote and assist self-help development in neglected communities, and a significant number of smaller, "citizen-initiated" rural community development associations (CDAs) that have adopted a "catalytic" (versus paternalistic) approach to village self-help. But the overall character and priorities of the sector are chiefly middle-class.

The leaders and membership of Egyptian NGOs are also overwhelmingly male. Few associations include women on their boards of directors and not more than two (2%) percent of the sector are women's associations. But a large proportion of NGO staff are women - especially in day-care centres and sewing skills training and production - and women and children are the principal beneficiaries of major NGO services. Some of these NGO staff have been trained in the Schools of Social Work in Egypt's universities and colleges, but relatively few are provided with opportunities for continuing staff development and further training.

The prominent growth and strengthening of the NGO sector in recent years has been chiefly urban. This is certainly true of NGO health services, social assistance and general institutional development. This strong urban bias reflects, in large part, the activism and leadership of urban Muslim welfare associations in both health and aid to the poor. Community development associations (CDAs) which predominate in rural Egypt have not been significant providers of either health services or aid to the poor. And more than half of all main villages - and nearly all smaller satellite settlements in rural areas - have no community NGO at all. While all governorates report considerable numbers of active NGOs, geographic outreach in rural areas is spotty and concentrated around the provincial cities. Many of the poorest and remote districts are served hardly at all by local NGOs. Both NGO sector revenues and spending are increasingly concentrated in metropolitan and urban areas, led by religious and non-religious social welfare associations. Foreign donors and international NGOs have played a leading role in extending technical assistance, programme funds and organizational support to rural CDAs as government aid has shrunk. Indeed, this intermediary role in support of community-based NGOs has become the preferred approach of most international NGOs and aid donors in Egypt. Local NGO capacity-building and organizational development rank high among the priorities and purposes of the foreign aid community in Egypt today.



Summary Profile and Priority Needs of the NGO Sector

In planning assistance to Egypt's NGO sector and possible partnership with local associations, a summary profile of the sector is useful. This profile outlines the general composition of the sector, based on the actual composition of the NGO sector in a nationally representative sample.²⁵ It is a typology based on level of activity and financial revenues. From the evidence of these three governorates, the overall composition of Egypt's NGO sector might be summarized as follows:

Of the total of 14,500 NGOs now registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs

- 25% or 3,600 NGOs are inactive
- 3% or 450 are new NGOs (established less than 3 years with yet little experience, activity or achievements)
- 7% or 1,000 NGOs are private member associations.

The remainder - 65% of all registered NGOs or 9,500 associations -- of the sector are active, community-oriented associations. These associations range in size from the very small and weak (i.e. Iess than US\$ 1,000 in annual revenues) associations that number approximately 2,400 NGOs or one-quarter (25%) of the entire sector to the estimated 500 largest NGOs - the top 3-5% of the sector - with full-time programme and administrative staff and total revenues exceeding US\$ 50,000 annually. A summary profile of these 9,500 active, community-oriented associations is shown in the Structure of Egypt 's NGO Sector on the following page.

The top 3-5% of the sector, the largest Egyptian NGOs, may be further divided: a) one-half (or some 250 associations) are non-religious social service associations with close historical ties to government, especially the Ministry of Social Affairs, and directed by former (retired) senior government officials with staff seconded from government (examples include the Red Crescent and Productive Families Associations); and b) the other half (approximately 250 associations) are large independent organisations established and directed by private citizens. At least three-quarters of these latter NGOs are religious welfare associations.

What is not indicated by this summary profile is that Egypt's NGO sector remains highly fragmented. Rivalries between associations at both the local community and national levels are not uncmmon. But the great majority of associations have little or no contact with each other. Umbrella organizations of Egyptian NGOs at national and regional levels exist²⁶, and from time to time, a national Council for NGOs has been created, but none of these has had much



Based on the findings of the Egypt PVO Sector Study (1994), see *Note 16*. The figures given here are general orders of magnitude - reasonably close estimates - and not exact figures. But the resulting profile is thought to approximate closely to the general reality of Egypt's NGO sector. The actual percentages are unlikely to deviate more than 2-3% from the estimated proportions shown here. This general profile is an informed 'sketch' of the structure and composition of the sector.

²⁶ Regional Federations of NGOs exist in all governorates, and National Federations of CDAs and other specific Ministry categories of NGOs are also registered. But these federations have very few resources, a long history of ministry staffing and control, and are geographically far-removed from most associations. At present, none of these federations are attractive candidates for assistance and support to develop intermediary or networking capacities to benefit community-based NGOs (LaTowsky 1990).

The Structure of Egypt's NGO Sector

Estimated rank distribution of all *active*, community-oriented NGOs, 1992

(estimated total number = 9,500 Egyptian NGOs or 65% of all registered NGOs)

Sector Rank	No. of NGOs	General Description of NGO	Total Annual Revenues: 1992
The Bottom: 25%	2,400	NGOs are very weak and, in many cases, active only part-time; 0-2 very small and irregular programs.	Less than US\$ 1,000
The 2nd Level: 27%	2,600	NGOs have limited success as providers of 1-2 small but regular services, and 1-2 minor, periodic activities.	US\$ 1,001 - US\$ 5,000
Lower Middle Level: 18%	1,700	NGOs have 2-3 established service programs and modest experience mobilizing local resources for community projects.	US\$ 5,001 - US\$ 10,000
Upper Middle Level: 15%	1,300	NGOs have 1-3 intermediate- sized programs, significant facilities and successful experience mobilizing resources for community projects which they implemented. Several full- time staff and experienced leadership.	US\$ 10,000 - US\$ 25,000
The Upper Level: 10%	1,000	NGOs have 1-2 large service programs, expanded facilities and institutionalized relationships to the local community. These are strong, active NGOs with a number of full-time programs and administrative staff. A "pre-professional" NGO.	US\$ 25,001 - US\$ 50,000
The Top: 5%	500	NGOs have 1-4 <i>major</i> service programs, expansive facilities, and are important service agencies.	More than US\$ 50,000

TOTALS: 9,500 active, community-oriented NGOs - US\$ 85 - 110 million revenues (1992)



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success. The sector also conspicuously lacks both indigenous, intermediate-level associations that provide resource, training and technical assistance to local community-based NGOs, or sustained networks of collaborating proximate NGOs. There are a very few exceptions, including the national Muslim association that leads the Kafaalet al-Yateem programme and more recently CEOSS. International NGOs, notably CARE/Egypt, have effectively pioneered this outreach and support to community-based associations, especially rural CDAs. But the support of international NGOs is project-specific and time-limited. Community Development Services (CDS), an off-shoot of the Near East Foundation, provides assistance to NGOs in addition to running its own direct welfare programmes. Likewise, private-sector outreach, training, technical assistance, resources and consultant support to Egypt's non-profit sector is very underdeveloped. The development of private-sector and non-profit sector institutions to assist individual community-based associations is an NGO sector priority in Egypt.

Extensive study of Egypt's NGO sector in the past few years makes clear that "lack of financial resources" is not a chief impediment. Nor are current laws governing the sector. Regulatory reform - while recommended on specific points - would not itself significantly strengthen the capacities of Egypt's NGO sector to support specific target groups and catalyze community self-help initiatives. Rather, the sector's priority needs are enhanced leadership, management development, outreach, new programme models, mutual support and community organizing. The considerable successes of many independent associations and "best practice" programme models such as Kafaalet al-Yateem amply demonstrate what capable organizations and their leaders can achieve. There are many associations that are keenly interested to develop and emulate such success; they are hungry for appropriate and effective new programme models that address priority needs and publicly valued services. But there are presently very few resources or organizations to support them. Their needs would be best served by periodic but sustained technical assistance and a consultative approach to management support in the context of specific programme's implementation over several years.

The prospects for sector growth are, however, good. The number of new NGO registrations is likely to continue its 2-3% annual rate of increase of the past decade. And the sector's relations with national government remain cordial, if not actively supportive. In practice, national Ministries give little overt encouragement to the NGO sector. Key officials are more likely to view the sector and participatory development with either irrelevance or suspicion. Active commitment to strengthening NGO sector capacities by the national government is unlikely. But official opposition is also not often intrusive or long-term. And NGO relations with *local* government and local politicians are often strongly positive. Many local officials are personally familiar with the contributions of local NGOs to local society and support their activities with local government grants for selected services and community infrastructure projects. Hence, donor and outside interventions to enhance NGO sector capabilities are far more likely to succeed and enjoy official support at regional levels than nationally.



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